



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Coronation Blues

The recent coronation of King Charles III prompted Dr Anthony Grenville to reflect on the differences between the Britain of 1953 – when Queen Elizabeth II was crowned – and today.



Even as a child of eight in June 1953, I was caught up in the wave of optimism and confidence in the future that accompanied the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. That ceremony held out the promise of a new post-war era, a second Elizabethan Age, when Britain would emerge from the sufferings of the war and the hardships of the years of austerity into a brighter, better and more prosperous future. Benjamin Britten's opera *Gloriana*, performed as part of the celebrations, used the name that Spenser had given Queen Elizabeth I in *The Faerie Queene*, his epic poem of the 1590s, to make explicit the expectation that the reign of the young Queen would replicate something of the glory and adventure of her illustrious predecessor. Though Britain, after granting independence to India in 1947, had ceded its empire and its place as a dominant world power, we all trusted that the nation would maintain its primacy in other significant spheres. That was, perhaps, particularly true of the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain, many of whom harboured especially warm feelings

towards the country that had taken them in after their expulsion from their native lands.

When I compare the upbeat mood of those distant days to the mood of the country in the year of the crowning of King Charles III, seventy years later, I am overcome with sadness: sadness at the reduced state of Britain and its place in the world, sadness at the decades of economic mismanagement that have left us with one of the lowest standards of living in western Europe, and sadness at all the post-war promise left unfulfilled. Who today hails the dawn of a new Age of King Charles? While in 1953 we confidently expected higher standards of living and a better quality of life, in 2023 millions of our fellow citizens face only the prospect of being cast into poverty. What has become of the country which my parents, who sought refuge here from Nazi-occupied Vienna in 1938, had come to admire and love and where they were happy to build a new life?

*Continued on page 2*

### ENJOYING SUMMER

It is with great pride that we share a photo (p.3) from our final tree dedication ceremony, wrapping up AJR's fantastic two-year project, 80 Trees for 80 Years.

Also in this issue is the first Letter from Israel written by the CEO of the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, plus articles contributed by the National Literacy Trust (p.11), the International Tracing Service at the Wiener Holocaust Library (p.4), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (p.13) and the Ben Uri Research Unit (p.15). These are just some of the organisations with which the AJR works closely throughout the year.

We welcome your feedback on these and any other topics which are of interest to the Jewish refugee community.

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*Please note that the views expressed throughout this publication are not necessarily the views of the AJR.*

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## Coronation Blues (cont.)

Fundamental to Britain's long-term decline have been the weary decades of economic failure, relative to other European countries, most marked in the first three post-war decades, when Britain became known as 'the sick man of Europe', and again in the no-growth years following the financial crisis of 2008/09. It is striking that Britain, alone among the countries of western Europe, has experienced no post-war economic miracle. West Germany had its *Wirtschaftswunder*, which also lifted the countries in its economic orbit into unprecedented prosperity, while French economic growth between the end of the war and the onset of the oil crisis in the mid-1970s led to those years being termed 'les trente glorieuses'; you would have to be mildly deranged to describe British economic performance over that period in similar terms.

Italy also enjoyed its *miracolo economico*; its backward, predominantly agricultural economy underwent a process of rapid industrialisation, as a result of which new industries, like the producers of washing machines Indesit and Zanussi, soon put their British rivals out of business. One might say, in cinematic terms, that Italy went from *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) to *La Dolce Vita* (1960) in little more than a decade. Spain and Greece have also enjoyed periods of very fast economic growth, as the result of tourism and access to the European market; even Ireland, in the 1950s a poverty-stricken basket case with GDP per head only half that of Britain, had a few decades later left its larger neighbour trailing in its wake. These periods of rapid economic

growth provided all western European countries – except Britain – with the wealth to invest in and modernise their industries as well as to fund their social services, health and education systems, housing stock and transport infrastructure adequately.

When I first went to Austria in the 1950s, the higher level of prosperity in Britain, the greater spread of cars, telephones, televisions and the like, and the superior standard of public welfare were immediately obvious; but for decades now Austria has enjoyed health and welfare provision, alongside material abundance, that we can only dream of. For the British economy has been internationally uncompetitive for large parts of the post-war period, as shown by its chronic balance of payments deficit (surplus of imports over exports). That failure has been reflected in the lasting weakness of its currency, which has experienced a series of drastic devaluations (1949, 1967, 1992 and 2016) as well as numerous minor falls. The pound sterling had emerged from the war at a level of 4.04 US dollars, reduced to \$2.80 in 1949, \$2.40 in 1967 and currently resting around \$1.20. When right-wing newspapers celebrate the pound 'soaring' towards the dizzy heights of \$1.25, one can only respond with a hollow laugh.

The fall in the pound against the German mark has been even greater: from just under 12DM in 1950, the pound had fallen to less than 3DM in 1999, when the mark was absorbed into the euro. Devaluation on such a scale represents a huge loss of purchasing power: if the pound had merely maintained its value

against the mark, instead of losing some three quarters of it, a £40,000 BMW would have cost £10,000 and a £60 Braun electric shaver £15. (The pound has of course continued to lose value apace since 1999.) Since 1953, the British people have experienced impoverishment on a scale almost comparable with that of Greece during the euro crisis. One might argue that the Greeks were impoverished far more quickly and painfully; but one could equally well contend that they were for that reason forced to address the underlying problems besetting their economy, and so could return to the path to prosperity, whereas Britain's economic problems remain unresolved.

The countries of eastern Europe are also experiencing rapid and consistent economic growth; the car factories that used to employ tens of thousands in Birmingham and Coventry now grace cities like Mladá Boleslav (Czech Republic) and Nitra (Slovakia). At present rates of economic growth, the reign of King Charles III is very likely to witness the dismal turning point at which the average Briton becomes poorer than the average Pole. Brexit may well succeed in its aim of deterring eastern Europeans from emigrating to Britain, by so impoverishing the country that few Europeans would wish to come and work here in the first place. That is a sad contrast to the eagerness with which many refugees of the 1930s and 1940s embraced Britain and what they perceived as its place in the world.

**Note from Editor:** Dr Grenville has written a second part to this article, focusing on Britain's place within the wider world, which will appear in our September issue.



### AJR AT BLETCHLEY

In June AJR staff members from all over the UK enjoyed a wonderful trip out to Bletchley Park, learning about the estate which became the principal centre of Allied code-breaking during WW2.



### HEADING TO HUDD

AJR Next Generations will visit the Holocaust Centre North in Huddersfield on Sunday 15 October at 2pm to see the exhibition and meet members of the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association. More information will follow but please save the date.

# The show must go on

**It was a beautiful summer evening. The crowds were spilling out of the pubs close to the Marylebone Theatre, near Regents Park. We were a group of AJR members going to see *Dedication*, a one-person show in which New York pianist Roger Peltzman uses drama, humour, music and imagery to recount his family's tragic history fleeing the Nazis in war-torn Europe.**

Except that we didn't get to see the show due to technical problems (the only performance affected during a two-week run). The performer was clearly upset by the situation and, naturally, the audience disappointed. At first. We had arranged a brief Q&A after the show between Roger and Malcolm Miller, a second-generation musicologist AJR member. When it became clear that the technical problems could not be resolved quickly, Roger and Malcolm agreed to turn the event into 'an evening in conversation' including a spell-binding rendition of

Chopin's *Nocturne in D flat Op.27 No.2* by Roger, which left us all wanting more.

In place of *Dedication* we got a unique insight into the life of this talented performer. The story of his family in Poland and those who fled to Belgium, his mother's trauma and his uncle, Norbert Stern, a brilliant pianist murdered in Auschwitz at age 21, the inspiration behind the show. And his own feelings about being second generation.

Huge thanks to Malcolm Miller for stepping in and saving the evening and mazeltov to Roger, who has just been nominated for an *Offies* award in the category of Performance Piece.

**Debra Barnes**  
AJR Next Generations Manager

**NOTE FROM EDITOR: Malcolm subsequently attended a flawless performance of *Dedication* and declared it "excellent... the staging with visual and audio design made it very dramatic and Roger's performance was very effective". Read more on [www.classicalmusicdaily.com/2023/06/dedication.htm](http://www.classicalmusicdaily.com/2023/06/dedication.htm)**



## DEDICATION IN DORCHESTER

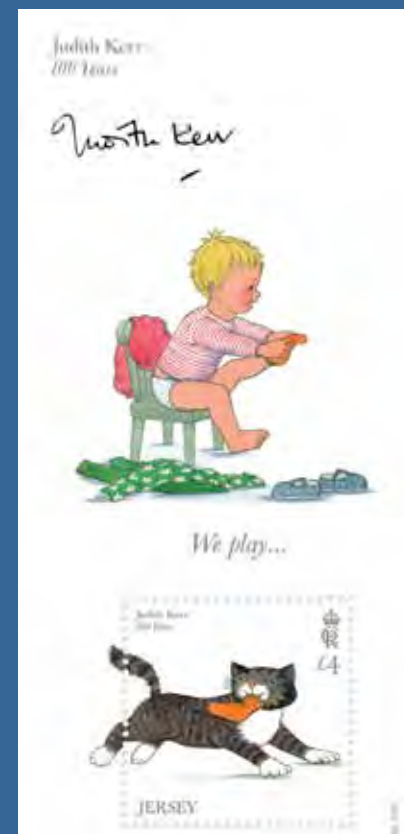
On Friday 30 June, the last ceremony for our wonderful 80 Trees for 80 Years project finally took place. Despite the windy and rainy weather, a lovely group of fifteen people gathered in the gardens of Thomas Hardy School in Dorchester to celebrate the Silver Birch tree that was originally planted in January 2022. Due to Covid no ceremony took place at the time, thus the 2023 service provided a more significant and moving way for the tree's sponsor, AJR member Leonard Honey, and the school to commemorate the lives of Henry and Lila Honey, who found refuge here from Czechoslovakia in 1939. Their remarkable biographies were read by two students of the Student Voice and Ms Jane Apfel recited the Kaddish prayer of Holocaust Remembrance in Hebrew. As Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset Mrs Walters' closing words pointed out, the tree symbolises the living legacy of Jewish refugees and memorialises their heritage for future generations.

# THE TIGER HAS COME TO JERSEY

**Jersey Post has issued a new set of stamps to commemorate what would have been the 100th birthday of Judith Kerr.**

Featured across the set of eight stamps released in June are illustrations from *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*, *Mog the Forgetful Cat* and *The Crocodile Under*, among other much-loved stories.

Philatelic Marketing Manager Rachel MacKenzie said Jersey Post was "honoured to have been given permission to reproduce a selection on this set of stamps" and excited to be "paying tribute to such a wonderful author and illustrator, and one who has left a lasting impression on so many people's childhoods."



The stamp sheet issued by Jersey Post to mark Judith Kerr's centenary

# Recovery & Repair

## SUPPORTING JEWISH FAMILY HISTORIES OF THE HOLOCAUST IN BRITAIN

Nearly 80 years after the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, many people still have unanswered questions about what exactly happened to their relatives during the Holocaust. A team from The Wiener Holocaust Library is travelling around the UK, working to help people answer those questions.

Buchenwald concentration camp card for Abraham Paszternak – an example of the type of documentation that can be found in the ITS Archive



In this article, **Elise Bath**, who is the International Tracing Service's Archive Team Manager at the Wiener Holocaust Library, tells us that the team is in the middle of a three-year outreach project called *Recovery & Repair: Supporting Jewish Family Histories of the Holocaust in Britain*, working with families to try to find out what happened to their loved ones. Team members have already visited sites in Belfast, Manchester, Huddersfield, and Leeds, and are delighted that Scotland is their next location. The team will be visiting Glasgow and Edinburgh on September 10-12<sup>th</sup> 2023 to host a series of events helping raise awareness of the Library's holdings, and how they can be used to find out what happened to people affected by Nazi persecution.

In Glasgow, the team is being hosted by the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre from 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> September, with events including

a family history workshop, drinks reception and chance to view a temporary exhibition with presentations from its co-curators. On 12<sup>th</sup> September, the team will be headed to Edinburgh's Scottish Storytelling Centre for a similar programme.

During these free events, attendees will have the chance to view our temporary exhibition *Fate Unknown*, which explores the history of the search for the missing after the Holocaust, and hear from its curators. People will also learn how to access the Library's resources, including the International Tracing Service (ITS) Archive. This remarkable collection of over 30 million documents from the Nazi and post-war era is an invaluable tool for researching what happened to people affected by Nazi persecution.

Experts from The Wiener Holocaust Library

will also be available for one-to-one sessions to answer your questions and provide tailored advice on researching your specific family histories. Significant information that can be uncovered in these sessions: at the recent Leeds event, one attendee was helped to identify two cousins using the ITS Archive; and another found new information about what happened to her father, describing the new information as "life changing".

The Library's resources also offer a wealth of information for academic and thematic research as well as being incredibly useful for genealogical work. We welcome historians, archivists, family historians, heritage practitioners, and anyone interested in Jewish and Holocaust history and its aftermath.

If you can't make it to one of these in-person events, don't worry! The Library's team often hosts online and in-person family research events, with practical tips on how to carry out your own research, and how to access the Library's holdings. Previous events can be seen on the Library's YouTube channel, and keep an eye on our social media for information on upcoming events.

More details of all these events, as well as information on how to sign up is available via The Wiener Holocaust Library's events page. If you have any questions, please email [info@wienerholocaustlibrary.org](mailto:info@wienerholocaustlibrary.org)



Elise Bath from the Wiener Holocaust Library leading a family history research workshop in Leeds

# LETTER FROM ISRAEL FROM THE AICEO

## PRESERVING HERITAGE AND FOSTERING UNITY



In the tapestry of Jewish history, there are organisations that embody the spirit of unity, service, and preservation

of heritage. The Association of Israelis of Central European Origin and the Association of Jewish Refugees in London are two such organisations that have made significant contributions to their respective communities. Despite their geographical separation, these associations share remarkable similarities in their dedication to community service and the preservation of Jewish heritage.

The Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, founded in 1932 during the fifth aliyah, emerged as a haven for Jewish immigrants from Central Europe seeking refuge in the Land of Israel. Originally known as the German Immigrants Association, it provided vital support and a sense of belonging to those embarking on the challenging journey to their new homeland. The association's commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of Central European Jews fostered unity and solidarity among its members.

Moreover, the Association of Israelis

of Central European Origin actively engages in philanthropic efforts to support vulnerable members of the community. By organising social welfare programs and initiatives, the association extends a helping hand to those in need, fostering a sense of solidarity and compassion among its members. This commitment to community service strengthens the bonds within the Central European Jewish community and contributes to a more inclusive and supportive society.

Similarly, the AJR in London was founded in 1941 to support Jewish refugees fleeing persecution and seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom. Both organisations became a beacon of hope, offering assistance, advocacy, and a welcoming community for those who had lost everything.

While these two organisations developed in different contexts and regions, they share a deep commitment to community service, cultural preservation, and the celebration of Jewish heritage. Both have played crucial roles in ensuring the continuity of traditions and customs that bind generations together. Through their programs and initiatives, they have provided platforms for education, cultural exchange, and intergenerational dialogue, bridging the gaps between the past, present, and future.

Recognising the shared values and common goals of the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin and the Association of Jewish Refugees in

London, there is a unique opportunity for collaboration and mutual support. By forging stronger ties and sharing best practices, these organisations can create a network of cooperation that transcends borders and enriches the lives of Jewish communities worldwide.

In unity, service, and the preservation of heritage, the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin and the AJR in London stand as shining examples of the positive impact organisations can have on their communities.

**Leora Shaham-Peters**

*CEO of the Association of Israelis of Central European Origin (AICEO)*

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# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY

Peter Phillips' letter (May) absolutely confirmed my own thoughts when giving talks to schools and various other groups about the reason for coming to England on the last Winton train in August 1939. I have always had a bad memory (resulting in bad school reports). We were lucky in having both parents saved and in the UK. They, however, never told us anything. I spent my wartime years in a Czechoslovak school (staying in touch with some of the pupils till now), and later lived in France, and my sister emigrated to the USA. I did not get involved with my 'past' until 40 years after the events, thanks to Esther Rantzen, when we discovered Nicky Winton.

From then on I became very involved with my past and with the then Czechoslovak Republic – but that's another story.

I am now nearly 94 and for the past 10 years have visited schools and various organisations telling them about my/our journey (with a 3-year-old sister) to the UK. I stress that I do not actually remember any of it, I know it happened, have various articles like the label I wore and the autograph book my grandfather gave me. I must have been told about it by others who also travelled on the trains, read about it; I also have a problem with being described as a 'survivor' on some of the notices announcing my talk, especially knowing what the real survivors experienced.

I can only tell what happened.....we – Peter Phillips – you and I, and the few still alive who were there, knowing we are valued by our listeners to be able to tell the tale, hoping it will never be repeated – or are we fighting another tragic war under the present refugee circumstances?  
*Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines,  
Preston, Lancs*

## HAMERMESH FILMS

Your leading article about Mira Hamermesh in July was most interesting – she obviously covered a wide range of social issues, many of which remain relevant today. But it seems difficult to find any of the documentaries

that she made for Channel 4. I was only able to find a few extracts from "Maids and Madams". Is there some way in which one can get access to her work?  
*Susanne and John Bates,  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire*

**DAVID HERMAN REPLIES:** *Sadly it seems impossible to find VHS or DVD copies of Mira's films from Channel 4 or elsewhere. All I can suggest is to keep an eye out for seasons of her work at the BFI/NFT or other organisations – indeed the BFI might even be persuaded to show another season of her films.*

## LOVE NOT HATE

In response to the recent debate within these pages about Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's *Letter from Israel* in your April issue I firmly believe that the *AJR Journal* should not be a platform for personal political views. Personally, I found Ms Shefer-Vanson's views very offensive, especially as there are very many people in Israel who actively support the ELECTED government and I know that the Charedi and religious communities do many good deeds for the people of Israel. Your *Journal* is generally excellent and most informative on the core matters relating to the Holocaust and survivors, but I feel that Ms Shefer-Vanson's letter does her no credit and shames exactly what the *AJR Journal* stands for, which is to love and not hate.  
*Elliott Kersh, Manchester*

## JUDICIAL REFORM IN ISRAEL

My father, David Goldmeier, showed me Peter Phillips' letter about Israel in your July issue, and I write, as a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation refugee (with my father's blessing).

I am glad Peter has spoken to *many* Israelis who disagree with my father; however he could not have spoken to the *majority* of Israelis who are represented by the current *majority* government, who believe the judiciary is too left-wing.

Peter's belief about the apparent futility of Torah study and the negation of the protection it provides remains his opinion

and is not up for debate. Torah learning is a perfect way of life for religious Jews, and something that has not stopped for thousands of years; the birth of the State of Israel and the need for an army to defend it will not stop that.

Of course, the State of Israel, the IDF and Torah study do not contradict each other, and indeed there are many Talmudic Colleges that combine all of these. On Peter's next visit to Israel, he should consider visiting the library of the Talmudic College I attended, *Kerem B'Yavneh*, where there is a memorial to the 31 college students who fell in battle while defending Israel, and who I am sure would have wholeheartedly supported the judicial reform, had God spared them.

The issue of the Israeli judicial reform should not be as controversial as it has become; it is quite clear that the existing system is not fit for purpose and is therefore in need of change.  
*Simmy Goldmeier, Manchester*

## THOUGHTS ON JULY JOURNAL

I urge my fellow readers to share their views on subjects that might be of interest to fellow AJR members. Here are some of my own thoughts on the July issue.

1. I don't think that there can ever be too much written about those who suffered coming to the UK by Kindertransport. To me they were all heroes. However, I agree with Eric Elias of Israel that, by comparison, other refugees are not considered as news worthy. I came to the UK with my father and mother in February 1939, aged 3. There are many others who managed, luckily, to come with their parents. We too experienced hardships but we are generally forgotten. There are no statues for us, nor reunions. A little acknowledgment would be nice.
2. I am very confused about Stolpersteine. I had gone as far as having some designed for my parents Dr Marcus Pfeffer and Frau Betti Pfeffer. Then I changed my mind. First, my wife

thought they were appropriate only for those who perished in the Holocaust. Secondly, my parents lived in Leopoldstadt in Vienna 2, the Jewish area but one that doesn't have many visitors. I googled where they lived. It is now a very run-down area. Who would see the stones? I could change my mind again. Persuade me.

3. I did not know the full history of *HMT Dunera*. It seems that over two and a half thousand "enemy aliens" were transported on the Dunera from the UK to Australia. Whilst reading about this I couldn't help but compare it to Suella Braverman's plans to send illegal immigrants to Rwanda. For "enemy aliens" read "illegal immigrants". What's the difference?
4. "Continental". Yes, we were "Continental". This was to differentiate us from English Jewry who had been in the UK before and since WW1. The Continentals all met up at the Cumberland, Cosmo's, Dorice. They believed in Bildung. They were very different to the others.

OK. It's now your turn. Tell us what caught your idea in the *AJR Journal*.  
*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts.*

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** *We are proud of the AJR Journal's role as a discussion forum as well as a source of expert opinion. We warmly welcome all correspondence from our readers and promise to consider all letters for publication, no matter how controversial.*



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# LOOKING FOR?



**ROLF FRIEDLAND, FOOTBALL FAN**

John Leonard is writing a book about the infamous football game between Germany and England at the Berlin Olympiastadion. He would particularly like to know more about Rolf Friedland (pictured **third from left in the top row**), who was a German-Jewish fan who was subsequently helped by the England defender Bert Sproston to escape to England.  
[johnleonard1863@gmail.com](mailto:johnleonard1863@gmail.com)

**OTTO BLEIER**

Evelyn Frankford is searching for information on a distant relative: Otto Bleier, born 13 June 1921, Vienna. He was in England by 1939 but exempted from Internment. He may have contracted polio in the British Army during WW2 and was cared for by Evelyn's uncle, Walter Frankford.  
[erf917@gmail.com](mailto:erf917@gmail.com)

**CARL NUSSBAUM/BETTY GRUENBAUM**

Sabrina Renner seeks information

on Carl Nussbaum; also, on Betty Gruenbaum (who was born 1879 in Bauernbach, Germany) or any of their relatives. Betty was the aunt of Hertha Muehlfelder, who was murdered at Auschwitz in 1943 and about whom Sabrina is writing a biography.  
[renner\\_sabrina@web.de](mailto:renner_sabrina@web.de)


**DESCENDANTS OF JAMES AND ROSA BROH**

Author Karl-Heinz Kaiser is seeking information on the descendants of Dr. James Broh, a Jewish lawyer in Berlin who died 1942 in Paris); his wife (Rosa) was deported from Drancy and murdered in Auschwitz. It is believed that their son came to England in 1938.  
[kaiserooffice2018@gmail.com](mailto:kaiserooffice2018@gmail.com)

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD SYNAGOGUE**

In connection with research for a talk, does anyone have any knowledge about the use of the Corn Exchange in Bishop's Stortford as a synagogue during WW2 for evacuees and refugees?  
[ackaufman7@gmail.com](mailto:ackaufman7@gmail.com)

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# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

To some the art of the pre-Raphaelites is too florid, too romantic, too self-absorbed. It can seem a virtual overdose of Victoriana. Yet despite the lushness of the paintings, Tate Britain is keen to explore their radicalism in its major exhibition, *The Rossettis*, which continues until September 24.

The Rossettis – **Dante Gabriel, Christina and Elizabeth (née Siddal)** – tended to explore mediaeval religious subjects and Arthurian legend. Gabriel, who assumed the name Dante from the 13<sup>th</sup> century Florentine poet **Dante Alighieri**, was captivated by one particular type of beauty, that of his most significant muse, Elizabeth Siddal, the woman he later married. Siddal was the supermodel of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. Her flowing red hair and expressive grey eyes influenced all their ideas of female beauty. Among them, she was painted by **William Holman Hunt** and **Walter Deverell**, who described Siddal as “magnificently tall, with a lovely figure, and a face of the most delicate and finished modelling”. She famously posed for **John Everett Millais’** *Ophelia* (1852), for which she reputedly floated in a bath. That work is sadly excluded from this exhibition.

Dante Gabriel's often lurid but very painterly works are presented here beside the subtler ruminations of his poet sister, Christina Rossetti, presented on the walls as verbal commentary and voiced over. The exhibition features over 150 paintings and drawings as well as photography, interior design and poetry.

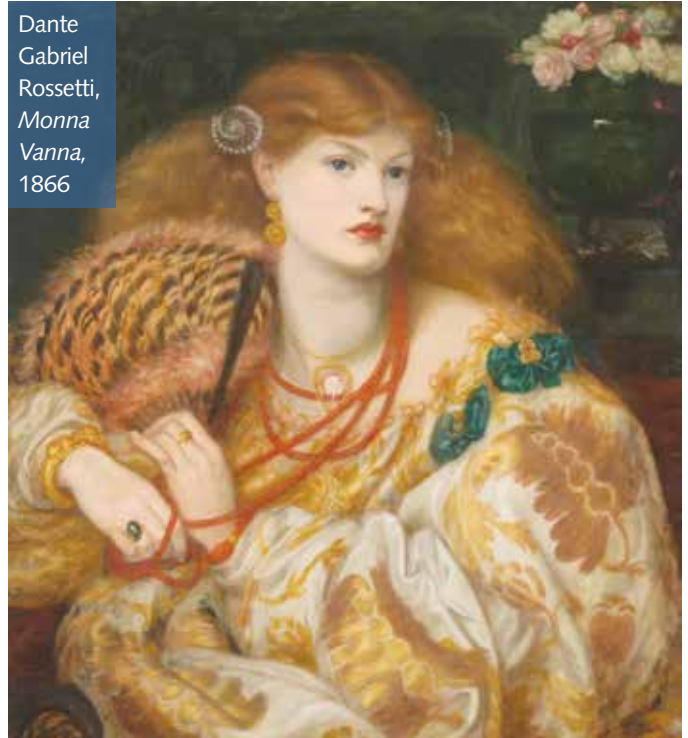
So who were the pre-Raphaelites? The Brotherhood was launched in 1848, devoted to the period of 15<sup>th</sup> century Italian art when medievalism was merging into the Renaissance. The avant-garde young artists wanted to adapt this moment in history to their own lived experience. They often referenced biblical sources and they frequently modelled for each other.

Gabriel's obsession with the medieval poet Dante Alighieri probably stemmed from their father, an Italian intellectual and revolutionary exile, who had devoted his career to teaching, translating and interpreting Dante's work. Gabriel attempted to describe beauty, love and truth in a world he considered material. He discovered a similar clash of political divides in medieval Florence as in contemporary Victorian London.

Perhaps it is this perception that led Tate Britain to claim the pre-Raphaelites were more radical than is generally supposed. While some have challenged this, the inclusion of the work of Elizabeth Siddal, may throw some light on their argument. This young aspiring woman artist of working-class background would normally have had no hope of achieving a name for herself in the exclusive monopoly of London's high art, as typified by the Royal Academy. But she was a self-taught, gifted artist and colourist, inspired by Tennyson, and Dante Gabriel encouraged her to paint and draw, rather than merely remain his artistic muse. There are examples of his creative collaboration with her, reflected in the exhibition. Much as he influenced her work, she is said to have equally influenced his.

Few of Siddal's watercolours and major drawings have survived, but the Tate has garnered several. One of them, her 1854 drawing of a young couple listening to music is placed near Rossetti's *The Blue Closet*, for their thematic links. But she diverges from the lushness we associate with his. Her style is simpler, linear, and in its own way highly emotive, with none of Gabriel's dramatic fatalism. Her painting, *The Macbeths*, features her and Rossetti as the hapless couple and the painting is deep and muted, doom-laden from inception.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Monna Vanna*, 1866



Siddal's talents are often overtaken by her perceived role as a tragic muse. She was the only woman to exhibit at an 1857 Pre-Raphaelite exhibition. Sadly she was addicted to laudanum and died young, in the second year of her marriage to Rossetti, probably of an overdose. Had she lived she may well have made a more powerful impact on the development of art at the time.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's ethereal *Beata Beatrix*, featuring Siddal, is based on Dante Alighieri's poem, the *Vita Nuova*, mourning the death of his beloved Beatrice. It mirrors Gabriel's own grief at the early death of his wife, and his desire to show a spiritual transformation in his painting.

Rossetti had other muses, including Fanny Cornworth and Jane Morris. Their unconventional relationships examine the working women who inspired pre-Raphaelite art. There is also the evolution of the *femme fatale*, such as *Lady Lilith* (1866-8) and *Mona Vanna* (1866). It is the later Aesthetic portraits which provide a context for the achievements of these working women.

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

# WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS IN ESSEN



The Heinemann & Wertheimer descendants in Essen



The group gathers round Salomon's portrait in Essen

**In April 2023 members of the Heinemann and Wertheimer families met in Essen – almost 85 years since many of their ancestors had fled Germany with the rise of the Nazis. Some did not survive and it was especially for those that the families wanted to remember and retrace their steps. Janet Heinemann takes up the story.**

My great-great-uncle Salomon Heinemann was born in Essen in 1865, where he had one older brother & two sisters. He trained in the legal profession and while a young man met Anna Wertheimer. Her sister Toni was already married and living in Essen. They were both from the growing Jewish middle class and had shared interests in the arts, culture & music. They had no children but it is their story that reunited our two families a generation later.

My sister Ruth and I had been researching our family history with the help of a historian in Aachen, who helped us learn more about the fate of the various Jewish-owned textile mills, one of which belonged to our grandfather. One of the restitution documents he shared made mention of a Renoir painting which had been owned by Salomon. We already knew that Salomon and Anna had not survived the Holocaust but this was the first we had heard of the Renoir and we were curious to know what had happened to it. Our search led us to the Wertheimer family

and Jane Dorner, the great niece of Anna. It turned out that their side of the family already knew about the Renoir and had tried to trace it to no avail.

Coincidentally the director of the Alte Synagogue in Essen was also researching Salomon Heinemann with the aim of producing a booklet and lecture about him. The more we discovered about Salomon – how influential he had been, particularly with the arts in Essen – the story grew into something not just about finding the Renoir but also our families' lives and how connected we had been until our branches were broken. Anna herself was a poet and writer involved in society in Essen.

This inspired us to visit Essen ourselves. There were seven representatives from the Heinemann family, with the Wertheimer family represented by Steven and Clarissa Dorner.

We met with Dr Uri Kaufmann from the Alte Synagogue who gave us a guided tour of the Jewish sites in Essen, including the Jewish cemetery where Salomon and Anna are buried next to Salomons' parents. It was particularly poignant to see their graves. They had both committed suicide after the November pogrom when their beautiful home and possessions were destroyed. Both sides of the family had the same black and white photo of the graves – from an unknown person – someone who must have wanted the families to know where Salomon and Anna were laid to rest.

We visited the recently restored and splendid architect-designed offices of Salomons' law firm on Zweigertstrasse 50. Outside are the stolpersteine for Salomon and Anna.

We then visited the Alte Synagogue, one of the most impressive buildings in Essen. It survived the Nazis and the War and now houses exhibitions about Judaism and Jewish life.

The next day we trekked around Essen visiting the sites of where our family would have lived. Eighty percent of Essen was destroyed in the war so we had to use a lot of imagination at some of the addresses. But it felt very special to be in the same place as our ancestors, walking in their footsteps many years later.

The next day we visited the Museum Folkwang. Salomon had helped to found the museum, by enabling the city and a group of philanthropists to purchase a large art collection. He established a method of running the museum as a joint private and municipal venture, so that neither partner could sell any painting without permission of the other. This system still runs today. However, during the rise of the Nazis many paintings were stolen or destroyed and the museum was taken over. All the Jewish benefactors either fled or were murdered, Salomon and Anna amongst them.

Eighty-five years later much has been done to try to heal these wounds and move forward. The city of Essen now treasures the work of its Jewish citizens and their influence lives on in street names and squares such as Hirschlandplatz – the Hirschland wing at the museum – and Kanzleihaus Heinemann. Books are being written and lectures given...Essen has not forgotten!

# UNCOVERING NEW EVIDENCE

Last September the *AJR Journal* published a fascinating report (Nazi crimes on British soil) about the work of ‘conflict archaeologists’ Caroline Sturdy Colls and Kevin Simon Colls, who investigate the evidence of modern genocides, especially the Holocaust. Here we share details of some of their current research.

## WINDERMERE

Caroline and Kevin have been locating the traces of the Calgarth Estate, where 300 orphaned Jewish children were housed in August 1945. Liberated from Theresienstadt, these children – the ‘Windermere Children’ – were sent to the Lake District for rehabilitation. They lived in a barracks within a Sunderland aircraft manufacturing plant at Calgarth. After the war, these buildings were knocked down.

Friends and colleagues at the Lake District Holocaust Project wished to know more about the children’s lives whilst they were at Calgarth, and so the Colls devised an archaeological project to locate the buildings that housed the children, and to look for any objects left behind. Although the estate had been demolished, they located the foundations of six buildings and found many relevant postwar objects. Volunteers, including second – and fourth-generation refugee descendants, took part in the excavations in 2019.

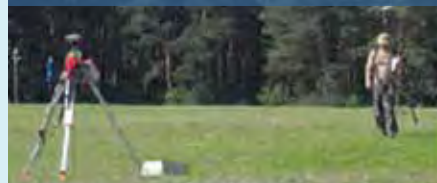
In 2022 the Colls returned to the site and, using geophysical survey techniques, found the remains of more structures. They are continuing this work and plan to scan objects that Windermere children and their families have shared. These are items that they acquired whilst in Windermere, or after the war – items that meant so much to children who had been robbed of everything whilst in the Nazi camps.

## TREBLINKA

Kevin and Caroline have spent over a decade analysing documents, photographs, witness testimonies, and



The Colls and their team have used geophysical and topographic survey methods to uncover new evidence at Treblinka



maps relating to the notorious Treblinka extermination camp. Their forthcoming book, *Finding Treblinka*, will provide new insights into the creation, architecture and evolution of Treblinka and the people who encountered these killing sites.

Kevin explains: “Using a wide range of state-of-the-art, non-invasive technologies and excavations, we uncover and explore the spaces and traces the Nazis tried to hide, providing a nuanced history of Treblinka’s genocidal operations. I reveal how my research led to the discovery of the gas chambers, mass graves and other structures in the extermination camp area. I discuss the objects that were uncovered during the excavations and what they can tell us about the things people took with them to Treblinka when they were transported to the camp. I show how the Nazis thought through every part of the death camp’s architecture, and tried to deceive people who were sent there into thinking they were being sent ‘to the East’ to work. I relate how inmates tried to resist, individually and in groups.

“Much of the book focuses on the evolution of genocide and mass violence at Treblinka, and I demonstrate how the existence of a labour camp and execution site facilitated the first mass executions of Jews, Roma and non-Jewish Poles in this area. I consider the relationships between the two camps and

demonstrate the network of locations that comprised Treblinka’s landscape.

“At Treblinka, my colleagues and I have been creating 3D models of the Holocaust-related items we found during our archaeological fieldwork. These, with items belonging to the Windermere children, will appear soon on a virtual museum attached to Staffordshire University’s Centre of Archaeology.”

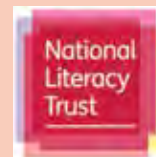
## UKRAINE

The Colls and their team have been working in Ukraine since 2016, documenting Holocaust mass graves. Since the invasion of Ukraine, they have carried out this work remotely, and have also recently initiated a project which aims to document the Russian invasion’s impact on these sites, and on those dating to the Holodomor – Ukraine’s Great Famine of the early 1930s – as well as to the Jewish heritage in Ukraine generally. This project is in the hands of the Colls’ university colleague Dr Daria Cherkaska, who spent a lot of time in Ukraine during the invasion. The team is using new satellite and aerial imagery to document the impact of Russian attacks and believe that their expertise in forensic archaeology might also assist with locating clandestine graves, if needed.

**Martin Mauthner**

# AJR FUNDING PARTNER

# The National Literacy Trust



## LITERACY FOR EMPATHY

The latest in our series on organisations that receive grant funding from the AJR looks at how the National Literacy Trust has supported both students and teachers on Holocaust Memorial Day and throughout Refugee Week.

At the National Literacy Trust, our mission is to give people from disadvantaged communities the literacy skills to succeed. From first words, through school days to training, jobs and beyond, we help them change their life chances through the power of words – reading, writing, speaking and listening.

We believe that literacy changes everything. It is the key to creating a fairer and more equal society and with greater literacy skills comes greater empathy and greater compassion. It is with this in mind that we approached the AJR, along with other like-minded funders, to help us to support students and communities with their learning around two focal points in our calendar: Holocaust Memorial Day and Refugee Week.

Our resources – aimed at pupils aged 10 to 13 – have included stories created especially for us by author Tom Palmer, whose award-winning titles include *After The War*, which tells the story of ‘the Boys’ of Windermere.

For HMD 2023 Tom recreated the story of one of the Windermere Children, Michael Novice, who worked for NASA, inventing the camera used during the 1969 lunar landing. Tom worked closely with Michael's family to research the true story; he also checked his work with a range of partners, including the Lake District Holocaust Project, and the Centre for Holocaust Education. The story is written in instalments to be read to students each

day, and we invite students to respond with their own writing, and we support them with workshops to do this. Our approach has focused around supporting students to write, to have a response to the stories that we put before them. We have found this first person source-led approach, using actual testimony, vital to improving students’ literacy skills as well as learning about refugees and the Holocaust.

Improving literacy skills is especially important right now as a high number of students are falling behind. In 2019 78% of Key Stage 2 students met the expected standards, but in 2022 this figure dropped to 68% – and just 54% for students receiving Free School Meals. There is a point of social equality here which is why we target our work for those that need it most.

As well as providing a range of classroom resources, the AJR funding has helped us to present people with lived experience to students. For HMD we were honoured to be joined by Holocaust survivor Mala Tribich. For Refugee Week our event included authors Ramsey Hassan, Ada Jusic and Nadine Kaadan, all of who were forced to leave their countries of origin (Somalia, Bosnia and Syria). A total of 74,599 students registered to watch these various events.

A core objective is to help teachers to feel more confident about discussing the Holocaust with their pupils. 100% of teachers said that having used these resources, they felt very confident (56%) or somewhat confident (44%) about discussing the refugee crisis with their pupils. One commented, “there was an immediate increase in empathy and appreciation for their own lives.” 77% of teachers reported that their confidence had increased as a result of using the resources, with comments such as “supported to deliver in an age appropriate way” and “they are full of information which are easily accessible and understood by both adults and children.”

Overall, the feedback was overwhelmingly



Author Tom Palmer taking part in a Literacy Trust event

positive and used words such as “brilliant”, “fantastic”, “useful”, “amazing” and “compelling”.

For us, some of the greatest results have not been related to literacy, but to empathy, kindness and compassion. Perhaps best summed up by these teachers’ comments:

*“...I think that especially with what is happening in the news at the moment with people having to flee war torn countries, our school will like to raise more awareness and raise money for charity to help others as a result.”*

*“I would like to thank you for allowing us to address important concerns head on and to ensure that the students are able to explore their own voices to support others.”*

We are looking forward to continuing and developing this work and these partnerships, to continue to support students and schools with further resources and events, enabling them to contribute towards a more compassionate world.

You can see the resources and watch recordings of the events using these links. For Holocaust Memorial Day go to <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/holocaust-memorial-day>; for Refugee Week go to <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/refugee-week>.

**Jim Sells,**  
National Literacy Trust

# Kindness in Solihull

On Thursday 28 September AJR members and friends are invited to a special performance of the ground-breaking verbatim play about the life story of Susan Pollack OBE.

Since its premiere, *Kindness: A Legacy of the Holocaust* has been seen by over 16,000 students in schools across England and Wales.

Now, with the help of AJR funding, the charity Voices of the Holocaust is staging the play on Thursday 28 September at Solihull Preparatory School. The performance will be followed by a panel discussion about the issues raised.



For more information please contact Judith at [HarrisJ@SolSch.org.uk](mailto:HarrisJ@SolSch.org.uk)



AJR's Alex Maws, together with members Renate Collins and Cynthia Hollinsworth, recently took part in a teacher conference in Cornwall, organised by Learning from the Righteous and Cornish Stories.



Thirty AJR members recently enjoyed a delicious cream tea while cruising the River Thames at Henley. Keep your eyes peeled on our socials for information on upcoming outings and events.

# MUSEUMS ON THE MOVE

The trustees of Jewish Museum London have announced closure of the current site in Camden's Albert Street.

The Jewish Museum London houses and displays the UK's nationally designated collection of Judaica, and has hosted numerous transformative exhibitions and events and established an award-winning education programme. But space restrictions and unanticipated rising costs have hampered its sustainability. The current Camden site is the smallest Jewish museum among major European cities, despite being home to Europe's second largest Jewish community and boasting the second largest collection. The museum is unable to meet all the demands of its successful schools' programme in the current site, and its exhibition space is not sufficient for the future ambitions of the organisation.

The museum shut its doors on 31 July, and the current site will now be sold to provide seed money for a more modern, engaging and inspiring visitor experience in a new, more prominent location. In the meantime, visitors will be able to encounter the collection in new and different ways.



Nick Viner, Chair of Jewish Museum London, said: "As we approach our centenary, we have an opportunity to re-envisage the museum for the future. Our decision to sell the current building is not taken lightly, but we must consider the longer-term sustainability of the museum. As the collection leaves Albert Street for a new temporary home, it will also create opportunities to experiment, as we develop the new vision for Jewish Museum London together with all our stakeholders."

Meanwhile the **UK's Migration Museum**, which has been temporarily housed in Lewisham, is to be given a state-of-the-art permanent home at 65 Crutched Friars in the City of London. The new venue, a



## SAVE THE DATE



### AJR'S ANNUAL TEA

**SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER**  
**Stone X Stadium, Saracens Ltd**  
**Greenlands Lane, Hendon, London NW4 1RL**

*Full details for booking will appear in the September Journal*

*The opportunity to meet friends, old and new*

**Enjoy a delicious cream tea and entertainment**

*Please bring your children and grandchildren*

 [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

stone's throw from the Tower of London, will house exhibition and event spaces exploring how the movement of people to and from these shores has shaped who we all are – as individuals, as communities, and as nations. It will be allied to a network of venues across the UK providing a platform for people to explore and share migration stories and our connections to each other.

# CALLING FOR EXTRA WITNESSES

The archive of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum holds over 22,000 interviews – and our collection continues to grow. Our interviews are freely accessible by anyone in the world with an internet connection.

The collection comprises two broad categories of interviewees: Holocaust survivors and so-called “witnesses.” The term “survivor” includes all individuals who suffered state-sponsored persecution by the Nazis, their allies and local collaborators, while a “witness” denotes anyone who lived during the period in question, and can describe, through their own memories, the political, social, and cultural environment of the 1930s or 1940s, including Jewish persecution.

The Museum has collected the stories of refugees since the 1980s, well before it opened its doors to the public in 1993. Nevertheless, work continues toward a fuller documentation of the refugee experience, including capturing the environment in so-called “host societies”, i.e., countries of transit or emigration. The successive waves of displaced persons had a strong effect on the interviewees’ formative years. For example, when Danish Jews fled to Sweden in 1940, some of the new arrivals transformed teenage social lives, as host communities organised dances



USHMM research and archive services

and established clubs for Jewish youth.

Building on the success of this and similar projects, we wish to conduct interviews with witnesses to Jewish refugee arrivals in the UK, and to gain a richer understanding of the challenges they faced upon arrival in the UK. What were the expectations of foster families? What was their understanding of the rise of fascism on the continent and of increasing Nazi expansion? What were the challenges to integration? We are eager to hear Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses’ memories

of the societal atmosphere in wartime and immediate post-war UK, including the penury of the reconstruction years, whether from foster-siblings, classmates, neighbours, or friends of Jewish refugees, and others who can help us to capture life during these years.

We are now faced with the last opportunity to rescue the evidence in the form of first-hand accounts. If you know anyone who wishes to be interviewed for this project, please contact Borbala Kriza at [krizab@gmail.com](mailto:krizab@gmail.com)

## ARTICLE 2 PENSION AND SUPPLEMENTAL HARDSHIP FUND PAYMENTS: PANEEM LETTER

The Claims Conference has recently sent out letters and reminders regarding proof of life confirmation via Paneem for the Article 2 pension.

Please note that the deadline for Article 2 proof of life is 1 September 2023, while for the Supplemental Hardship Fund it is 31 December 2023.

If you have received a letter from the Claims Conference to request that you self-certify via Paneem for either of the above, please attempt to do this with the help of a family

member or friend, if possible, as it is the speediest option and it is simple to use.

If you have any queries, or require a paper Proof of Life certificate for the above, please contact Rosemary Peters at [rosemary@ajr.org.uk](mailto:rosemary@ajr.org.uk) or 020 8385 3088 or Melanie Jawett at [melanie@ajr.org.uk](mailto:melanie@ajr.org.uk) or 020 8385 3072.

# Save the *Leaning Woman*

**A crowdfunding campaign has been set up to restore the Grade II listed *Leaning Woman* in Hammersmith, one of London's most important pieces of modernist sculpture.**

Designed in 1958 by the Czech-Jewish artist Karel Vogel, this semi-nude figure, nearly twice life size, appears to float, despite being cast in concrete around a metal armature.

The statue was part of a post-War programme to bring art to Londoners and to thank locals for the disruption caused by the Great West Road. She has been a much-loved Hammersmith landmark for over 60 years.

But the concrete has cracked and the internal structure is now rusting. The project includes removing previous



*Leaning Woman* © Heritage of London Trust

repairs, stopping corrosion, repairing cracks and applying a new watertight exterior coating.

As part of the restoration project young people will be invited to come and meet the professional conservators at work,

learn about Vogel and his life, and have a go at creating their own *Leaning Women*.

Support the campaign by going to <https://www.spacehive.com/help-us-save-the-karel-vogel-statue-w6>.

## FILM NOIR

**AJR member Janos Fisher, a regular contributor to this Journal, has made a study of cinematic genres. Here he tells us that a Film Noir is generally one with cynical heroes, made in a dark, brooding style, with interesting lighting effects and often with a complicated plot.**

Films of this genre express pessimism and are very often menacing. The great majority were made in America in the middle of the last century, invariably in black and white.

A few of the most popular of them were:

- *Sunset Boulevard*. Directed by Billy Wilder, with Gloria Swanson and William Holden.
- *The Maltese Falcon*. Directed by John Huston, with Humphrey Bogart and

Peter Lorre.

- *Double Indemnity*. Directed by Billy Wilder, with Fred McMurray and Edward G. Robinson
- *Ace in the Hole*. Directed by Billy Wilder, with Kirk Douglas
- *Night and the City*. Directed by the French-Jewish Jules Dassin.
- *Casablanca*. Directed by the Jewish Michael Curtiz, with Humphrey Bogart.
- Two French films, which I consider examples of the genre are: *Wages of Fear (Le Salaire de la Peur)* and *Riffifi*, directed by Jules Dassin, who was blacklisted in America.

English films that would qualify are, amongst others, *Brighton Rock* with the young Richard Attenborough and *The Third Man*, directed by Carol Reed, starring Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten.

Lastly, whilst admitting that I am slightly prejudiced, I would include three Italian films



Poster for the 1947 film *Brighton Rock*

directed by Vittorio de Sica: his pre-second world war film, *The Children are Watching us*, then *Shoeshine* and finally *Bicycle Thieves*. This last one achieved unparalleled critical success.

There are two reasons for including de Sica: in the first place, I always loved his films – the ones he directed (not the ones he acted in). Secondly, when he directed a film requested by the Vatican during the war, all the many extras he used in the film were Jews. He drew out the making of this film for as long as he could, thereby saving the lives of many Jews.

## SPOTLIGHTING

## HUGO DACHINGER

The Ben Uri Research Unit is recording the émigré contribution to British visual arts and culture since 1900. It has already published some 500 profiles, with a further 800 under research. Here is their profile of artist Hugo 'Puck' Dachinger, whose protégés included Francis Bacon.

Graphic artist, designer, painter and sculptor, Hugo 'Puck' Dachinger was born on 19 September 1908, to Jewish middle-class parents in Gmunden, Austria-Hungary (now Austria). He studied at the School of Arts and Crafts in Leipzig, Germany (1929–32), paying for his tuition by selling portrait drawings and working as a salesman and window-dresser and afterwards moved to Vienna, where he worked as a window-dresser for the English firm Saville and Co. He invented a system of moveable type, which he patented in 1933, establishing workshops in Leipzig, Zagreb and Budapest.

In 1938, sponsored by Saville and Co, Dachinger immigrated to England, settling in north London and establishing Transposter Advertising Ltd with Ernst Rosenfeld (which closed in 1945). In June 1940, Dachinger was arrested under Winston Churchill's policy of mass internment of 'enemy aliens' and was first held at a transit camp at Kempton Park racecourse, then interned in Huyton Camp, Liverpool and, finally, in Mooragh Camp, Ramsey, on the



Hugo Dachinger

© BEN URI ARCHIVE

Dame Margaret Hodge in front of Dachinger's portrait of her grandfather, Wilhelm Hollitscher



Isle of Man. During these seven months, Dachinger produced a vast quantity of artworks featuring domestic scenes, satirical cartoons, modernist designs and portraits of fellow internees. He often used found or ersatz materials including newspapers, toothpaste and gravy browning: his portrait of Austrian engineer Wilhelm Hollitscher (1940, Ben Uri Collection), one of a series made in Huyton, utilised the front page of The Times newspaper as an unconventional picture surface, dramatically integrating text into the composition. In 1940 Dachinger held an exhibition of his Huyton works in the camp entitled *Art Behind Barbed Wire*.

After his release in January 1941, Dachinger married German émigrée and fellow artist Meta Gutmann, who nicknamed him 'Puck'. He moved to Hampstead, where he remained for more than 40 years, and garnered significant critical attention. In 1944 Dachinger participated in an exhibition organised by the Free German League of Culture which offered cultural support to German refugees. The following year, his work was included in Ben Uri's Exhibition of Portraits by Contemporary Jewish Artists. Dachinger spent much time drawing cafés and people; he also continued to work as an inventor and designer for various publishing companies. His work featured in group exhibitions including *Kunst im Exil in Grossbritannien 1933–45* in Berlin, Oberhausen and Vienna

in 1986, and its smaller iteration at Camden Arts Centre, London, later the same year.

Hugo Dachinger died in London on 2 December 1995. His work was exhibited posthumously in exhibitions including *Art Behind Barbed Wire* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 2004); and Ben Uri's touring exhibition *Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile in Britain, c. 1933–45* (London, Isle of Man, and Birkenhead, 2009–10). In 2012 the Austrian Cultural Forum in London held the first UK Dachinger retrospective. Following Ben Uri's acquisition of the Hollitscher portrait in 2018, it was included in the exhibitions, *Out of Austria: Austrian Emigré Artists to the UK* (2018), and *ART-EXIT: 1939 – A Very Different Europe*, at the European Commission's 12 Star Gallery, London (2019), during which Labour politician Dame Margaret Hodge was interviewed by the press in front of the portrait of her late grandfather, Wilhelm Hollitscher. Dachinger's work is held in UK collections including the Ben Uri Collection, the British Museum, the Manx Museum on the Isle of Man, and the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

To see profiles of other émigré artists – and maybe even add your own insights – please log on to [Buru.org.uk](http://Buru.org.uk) and click on who you know or know of.

# REVIEWS

## HITLER, STALIN, MUM & DAD: A FAMILY MEMOIR OF MIRACULOUS SURVIVAL

Daniel Finkelstein  
(William Collins)

The last few years has seen the emergence of an extraordinary new literary genre: a series of powerful accounts of the experience of Holocaust survivors and refugees by their children and grandchildren. Daniel Finkelstein's *Hitler, Stalin, Mum & Dad* is the latest of these terrific family memoirs. It is superbly written, well researched (including a generous acknowledgement to the AJR), deeply moving and full of insights into the barbarism of two terrible dictatorships and the quiet virtues of liberal democracy and Jewish family life.

It is a very personal book. 'It's the story,' writes Finkelstein, 'of how my family took a journey which ended happily in Hendon, ... but on the way took a detour through hell.' One of its great strengths is how it evokes lives of domestic happiness, prosperity and security and then describes in painful detail how his grandparents 'lost everything they had.' And then how, with great courage, they managed to rebuild their lives in suburban north London. It ends, as it begins, with a loving family 'living happy, stable, safe, reasonably prosperous lives in the suburbs.' In between, there is disaster and loss.

The first hundred pages sets the scene and introduces us to two very different families. First, Finkelstein's mother's family in Weimar Berlin. Alfred Wiener, Finkelstein's maternal grandfather, was a prominent figure in German Jewry, working for the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, who from the 1920s started to monitor Nazi activities. Already by 1933 he had built up an enormous archive containing over half a million items. In 1933 he and his wife Grete left Germany for Holland with their three daughters, including Finkelstein's mother Mirjam, and started their lives

anew. Alfred Wiener built up 'the world's most important – the world's only – centre of anti-Nazi propaganda and research.'

Nearly 1000 kms to the east, Finkelstein's father, Ludwik, lived with his parents in a large villa in what was then Lwów (formerly Lemberg). The villa, writes Finkelstein, spoke of the family's wealth. It also 'told of their modernity and progressive spirit.'

Everything changed in a short time. Alfred Wiener moved to London where The Jewish Central Information office opened on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. It later became the Wiener Library and is now the Wiener Holocaust Library. His wife and daughters remained in Amsterdam. Wiener visited Amsterdam in February 1940. 'My mother wouldn't see her father again for five years,' writes Finkelstein. In May 1940 the Germans invaded Holland. 'My mother, my grandmother and my aunts were trapped.' In September 1939 Hitler invaded Poland from the west and Stalin invaded from the east. Finkelstein's father and his family were now trapped in the Soviet Union. This took them to the Gulag. The chapters on their experience of exile and what he calls 'The Island of Hunger and Death', are perhaps the outstanding chapters in the book, a story of trying to survive terrible hunger, back-breaking labour and the awful weather conditions. They are also perhaps the most original part of the story. 'The silence over the Soviets' crimes had its consequences' Finkelstein writes. 'There has never been a reckoning over what they did.' A great silence still hangs over Stalin's crimes and the fate of their countless victims, including Ludwik Finkelstein and his family.

*Hitler, Stalin, Mum & Dad* follows two ordinary middle class Jewish families and their experience of Nazism and Stalinism: Westerbork and Belsen for one family, freezing winters and hunger in the gulag for the other. And yet the book ends on a life-affirming note: 'Our family has survived. Love has conquered fate. In the battle with Hitler and Stalin, the victory belongs to Mum and Dad.' And to the virtues their lives, and the lives of their children, embodied.  
*David Herman*

## JUDITH KERR'S CREATURES: A CELEBRATION OF HER LIFE AND WORK

With a new chapter by Matthew Kneale  
HarperCollins

The centenary year of beloved children's author Judith Kerr has been marked by her publishers re-issuing her wonderful, beautifully illustrated biography, now newly updated by her son Matthew Kneale. Judith, who died in May 2019, produced over 30 books which she wrote and illustrated herself and which have sold more than 10 million copies throughout the world.

But Judith had a difficult start after her Jewish family was forced to flee Germany in 1933, when her father – theatre critic and poet Alfred Kerr – learned that his passport was about to be confiscated. The Nazis soon burned his books. Judith's story of her life in Switzerland and France, coming to England and what happened next is riveting and told in her three semi-autobiographical novels. Known collectively as *Out of the Hitler Time*, the most famous is of course *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*.

Struggling with her family's straitened circumstances, strings were pulled and Judith was awarded a scholarship at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London. Later building on the skills learned she was able to illustrate her first and most successful book *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. First published in 1968, it is based on a story her daughter Tracy loved when small. Judith was an astute observer of life, watching animals on trips to the zoo with her children and also noticing the characteristics and foibles of the cats they kept as pets. There were nine, starting with the eccentric Mog immortalised in a best-selling series. These books were designed to help children read and she limited the number of words.

Judith explains the process of her work, particularly the illustrations. Impressive examples of her notes and sketches are also used. Artwork is lavishly reproduced throughout, including textile patterns made in her early career before having her own children. Although

the tiger and cats are old favourites her work also includes crocodiles, kangaroos, geese, foxes, rabbits and animals from Noah's Ark, everything always tastefully done.

She also talks about her relationship with Germany which began only for family reasons and later became warmer as a new generation grew up which had not been involved in any Nazi horrors. She went to the opening of a new school named after her in Berlin. Written in a confiding style, the reader is taken on board and feels they know the author personally. She pays fond tribute to her husband of over 50 years, Tom – the celebrated screenwriter Nigel Kneale – creator of British television's early major hit – *The Quatermass Experiment*.

*Creatures* was first published for her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday but Matthew Kneale has added a new, thoughtful chapter about her work, its recognition and the honours heaped upon her. As he points out: "Her last years were among her most prolific and, remarkably, she produced a third of her books in her eighties and nineties." Even at 92 she decided it was time to try something quite new, including amazingly starting a new genre with *Mister Cleghorn's Seal*.

An impressive chronology of her life is produced at the back of this fine volume which is a touching tribute to a remarkable and supremely talented lady. Nobody can help feeling the greatest admiration for her!  
*Janet Weston*

**THE SURVIVOR: HOW I SURVIVED SIX CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND BECAME A NAZI HUNTER**

Josef Lewkowicz, with Michael Calvin Bantam

The story of a man who lost all his extended family and himself endured six concentration camps yet retained his strong faith and optimistic outlook is told in this remarkable memoir. Narrating at 96 Josef Lewkowicz tells of a happy life with his parents and brothers in the Polish town of Dzialoszyce, near Krakow, where Jews

formed 80 per cent of the population and he enjoyed a traditional religious education.

As conditions worsened after the Nazi invasion Josef travelled the countryside for food, supporting the family and planting the seeds of his extreme resourcefulness. The net tightened until the fateful day in September 1942 when they were all transported and, after a terrible journey, faced selection. Josef and his father Symcha were signposted left and his mother Sheindel and three younger brothers Meir Wolf, Hershl Zvi and Dovid Leib to the right. They were sent to Belzec extermination camp and tragically he never saw them again.


Josef and Symcha – who later perished – were bound for Plaszow and forced into gruelling work in brutal conditions, living under constant threat of extreme violence and sudden death. As Josef explained: "We had no option but to do so many dirty, terrible jobs. Our actions may be inconceivable in what passes as normality in today's world, but they kept us alive." Life became truly terrible when Amon Goeth, a new camp commandant, was appointed in February 1943. "He was the embodiment of evil, the personification of fear and death," stressed Josef. Working hours were increased and rations cut.

While still only a teenager Josef witnessed horrors of the most notorious concentration camps and accounts of these times are harrowing, They included Auschwitz, Mauthausen and Ebensee, involving hard labour, quarrying and down salt mines..

After liberation he journeyed to Vienna to stay with friends, by an enterprising combination of boating down the Danube and hitch hiking. Soon he returned to Dzialoszyce where the Jewish population was decimated and few returned. But after a hostile reception at his old apartment he was forced to flee for his life. Still barely 20, he ended up travelling round Austria and Germany as an intelligence officer for the US army searching for Nazis in hiding. This is an interesting and

intriguing part of the book. With fierce resolve he hunted out the notorious Goeth and provided damning evidence which helped lead him to justice and execution.

Peripatetic years in several countries followed and he became a successful diamond dealer in South America. He married and had his own family including a son and daughter named after his parents. A second son Tuvia – who had a distinguished financial and philanthropic career – was tragically killed in a road accident and this book is dedicated to him. Josef's love for his family, especially his late wife Perla, shines through. After her death he moved to Jerusalem practising his faith and continuing his passionate belief in education, including giving talks and re-visiting camps. His mission is to ensure the terrors of the holocaust are never repeated; his wonderful philosophy of generosity and the importance of bringing goodness into the lives of others is truly impressive.  
*Janet Weston*

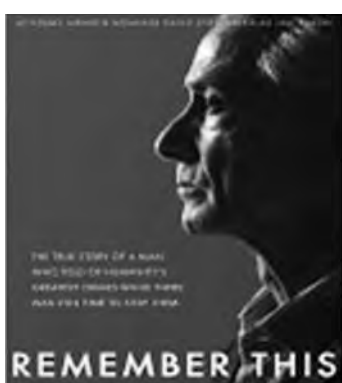


**PRIVATE SHOWING**

**REMEMBER THIS**

starring Academy nominee  
David Strathairn as Jan Karski

**THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 3PM**  
**THE EVERYMAN, BELSIZE PARK**



A genre-defying true story of a reluctant WW2 hero and Holocaust witness whose timely story of moral courage and individual responsibility can still shake the conscience of the world.

**£15 per person including refreshments.**

[www.eventbrite.com/e/private-showing-of-remember-this-tickets-657459106887](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/private-showing-of-remember-this-tickets-657459106887)

# OBITUARIES

## Sir Ben HELFGOTT

Born: 22 November 1929, Łódź, Poland  
Died: 16 June 2023, London



**When Ben Helfgott was liberated from Theresienstadt in 1945 he was one of the initial 300 arrivals to Britain known as *The Windermere Children*, who were brought to England after the war by CBF World Jewish Relief.**

Ben was then very weak, having survived great cruelty in several concentration camps. He and Mala (one of his sisters) were the only members of his family to survive the war; his mother and youngest sister were rounded up and shot by the Nazis and his father was shot whilst trying to abscond from a death march.

From Windermere Ben moved to Belsize Park in London, where he lived in a hostel. He helped to establish a club for Jewish young people, called the Primrose Club and attended Plaistow Grammar School, in an attempt to make up for six years of lost schooling.

In the summer holidays he went swimming on Hampstead Heath. There he watched people taking part in weight-lifting exercises. He asked whether he could try to lift some of the weights. One man said that he thought the weights would be too heavy for Ben but the 18-year-old lifted 180lbs into the air with ease. Ben remembered being hailed as “a natural.” Encouraged by this he began to train more seriously and became the British

title holder four times. In a few short years he became a champion. He described himself as having been a walking skeleton when he first arrived in the UK at the age of fifteen; yet, ten years later, he represented his adopted country at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, at the 1958 Commonwealth Games in Cardiff, where he won a bronze medal, and at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. He was captain of the British weightlifting team on all these occasions.

Together with other survivors Ben founded the ‘45 Aid Society which worked very hard over many years to teach the lesson of the Holocaust so that all can learn from it. By making people aware of the consequences and by widening the circle of enlightened human beings he hoped one can at least help to create the conditions to live in harmony and to exercise mutual respect and understanding of one another.

In 1966 Helfgott married Arza, with whom he had three sons and nine grandchildren.

Dr. Toby Simpson of the Wiener Holocaust Library sent us a vignette from the Library's newsletter which recounts that at a dinner to raise money for the Wiener Library endowment, in the presence of Prince Philip as guest of honour, Ben Helfgott and Hugo Gryn got a spontaneous round of applause. Ben had been involved in organising the fundraiser – yet another example both of how he gave so much to others and how much he was admired.

**Lilian Levy**

## Ruth BORONOW DANSON

Born: 17 September 1924, Breslau  
Died: 19 April 2023, London

**Ruth Boronow Danson's ‘superpower’ was an authentic interest in, and empathy for, everyone she met. Kindness; a wicked sense of humour; an engaging, easily-provoked laugh; a sense of playfulness making it effortless, even in her late nineties, to imagine her as a sassy child; soul; vibrant energy; family-centricity; generosity; decency, and luminous warmth were the hallmarks of her character. Her currency was love.**

In his eulogy, her nephew Peter Boswell described Ruth as “a true Renaissance Aunt!”. A profoundly diffident woman, she had eclectic interests and talents. Despite the divorce of her parents Ernst and Käthe Boronow she experienced a blissful early childhood in Breslau before the increasing Nazi threat. Only school interrupted her passion for outdoor pursuits with friends and her beloved brother Klaus, until Kristallnacht when her father, a dentist, was imprisoned in Buchenwald for a month, released on condition that his family left Germany.

Ruth emigrated to England with Käthe in March 1939 on the SS *Manhattan*, where Ernst, who had flown over, met them. There, she attended Anna Essinger's progressive Bunce Court school where – once she had artfully been persuaded to join fellow pupils in studying, rather than doing household tasks which she initially preferred – she thrived in the supportive ethos, learning lifelong skills of resourcefulness, resilience and empathy.



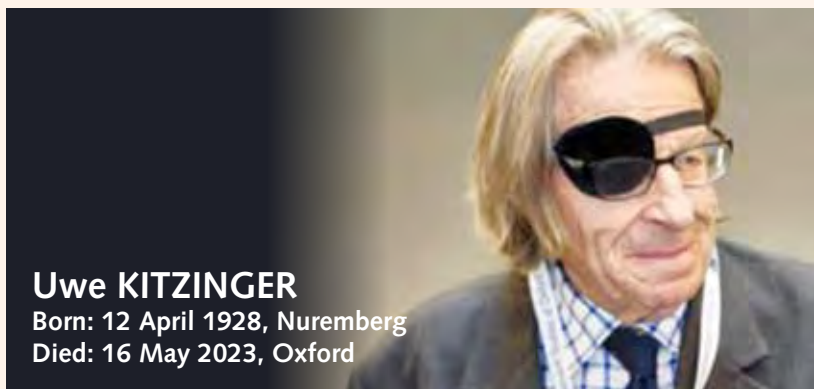
On leaving school she worked as a dressmaker, heading eventually to London where, at a party after the war, she met opera singer Charles Danson (born Karl Danielsohn, Berlin 1920). In 1949 they married and moved into the house they were to make a home for the remainder of their long lives. Ruth was a devoted and adoring mother to Jacqueline and Helen, adopted as babies. She created matching outfits for them and tended gloriously to the gardens, became an accomplished amateur pianist, and was a glamorous and entertaining host to a group of extraordinary friends from the same immigrant circles.

She did some work for Royal dress designer Norman Hartnell, so that every time a royal wedding was later shown on TV she was pestered by the impossible question: "... do you recognise THAT hem?", and later worked as a Secretary to Anna Freud.

After Charles died in 2008 she remained up for every adventure proposed, including a somewhat ambivalent visit to Breslau (now Wroclaw in Poland). Although shy, she gave two talks on Bunce Court. In her late nineties she was amazed and touched to be honoured by having some of her stuff chosen as exhibits for the Imperial War Museum's New Holocaust Galleries where, at a preview for contributors, Ernst was discovered in a photograph of a Buchenwald roll-call; and by helping to plant an AJR 80th anniversary tree and time capsule in honour of the family at Glyndebourne, where Charles had sung in the chorus.

She lives on through these wonderful legacies and all those who were privileged to be touched by her love.

**Jacqueline Boronow Danson**



**Uwe KITZINGER**  
 Born: 12 April 1928, Nuremberg  
 Died: 16 May 2023, Oxford

**In his long life Uwe Kitzinger never forgot his refugee background. Jewish on his father's side, in 1939 he and his family fled from Nuremberg to Croydon airport.**

A German officer had courageously helped the Kitzingers to escape. Just before leaving, as a gesture of thanks, Uwe handed his beloved teddy bear to the officer's three-year-old son. Over the years, Uwe kept in touch with the son and his family – and they eventually returned the bear, by now battered and patched, to its original owner.

In later life Kitzinger gave generously of his time, money and extensive contacts, in order to help refugees. With his English wife Sheila – she died in 2015, and was renowned for advocating childbirth at home, which she did five times – Kitzinger founded a charity in 1991 to deliver basic goods to refugees in Croatia during the war in Yugoslavia.

At his death he was the patron of Asylum Welcome, an organisation that is authorised to help refugees and asylum-seekers in Oxfordshire, where he lived. For many years he, almost single-handedly, financed its hardship fund, amongst other gifts to the charity. Its director Mark Golding said he 'made a difference to thousands of people in need of sanctuary and support. He represented the very best of what one person can offer his neighbour.'

After gaining a first-class degree in PPE at Oxford University, where he was a president of the debating club, Kitzinger had a distinguished academic career in Britain, France and the U.S. It began in the 1950s, when he was involved in the talks that led to the creation of the European 'common market', forerunner of today's European Union. When Britain entered 'Europe' in 1973, Kitzinger went to Brussels to serve as adviser to Churchill's son-in-law Christopher Soames, in charge of 'Europe's' foreign affairs. Kitzinger's book *Diplomacy and Persuasion* became a classic account of the negotiations that preceded UK entry. With a black patch over his right eye, following an operation to remove a growth, he became an easily recognisable figure on the 1970s European circuit. Unsurprisingly, he opposed Brexit – taking part, at the age of 91, in the huge London march that was part of the campaign for a second referendum.

**Martin Mauthner**



**DAY TRIP TO BRIGHTON**  
 TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023



Coach pick-ups in Edgware and Finchley Road

 [karendiamond@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karendiamond@ajr.org.uk)

## IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Tuesday 1 August	All day	Kingston/Ealing Outing	Ros Hart
Thursday 3 August	2pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 8 August	10am	Liverpool 'Knit, natter & games'	Michal Mocton
Sunday 13 August	All day	Edinburgh Fringe Open Day	Agnes Isaacs
Tuesday 15 August	11.30am	Wembley	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 16 August	2pm	Newcastle	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 17 August	12 noon	Birmingham	Karen Diamond
Monday 21 August	2pm	Hampstead	Ros Hart
Thursday 24 August	12 noon	Norwich	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 29 August	10.30am	Ilford/Wanstead	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 29 August	12.30pm	Edgware	Ros Hart

### CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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**Michal Mocton**  
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 07966 886 535

**Susan Harrod**  
 susan@ajr.org.uk  
 020 8385 3078

## ZOOMS AHEAD

Details of all meetings and the links to join will appear in the e-newsletter each Monday.

Wednesday 2 August @ 2pm	<b>Andrew Hesketh – Escape to Gwyrch Castle</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81156565279">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81156565279</a>	Meeting ID: 811 5656 5279
Monday 7 August @ 4pm	<b>Phyllida Scrivens – Joe Stirling: From Kindertransport refugee to Sheriff of Norwich</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85714787000">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85714787000</a>	Meeting ID: 857 1478 7000
Wednesday 9 August @ 2pm	<b>Marc Cave, Director of The National Holocaust Centre and Museum</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82255587787">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82255587787</a>	Meeting ID: 822 5558 7787
Monday 14 August @ 4pm	<b>The Biography of Calvin Klein – Calvin Klein: A Stylish Obsession</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84343315019">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84343315019</a>	Meeting ID: 843 4331 5019
Wednesday 16 August @ 2pm	<b>AJR Book Discussion (no speaker) – Bad Relations by Cressida Connolly</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87491234442">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87491234442</a>	Meeting ID: 874 9123 4442
Monday 21 August @ 4pm	<b>Anna Levin – Ripples on the River, celebrating the return of the otter</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81364406590">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81364406590</a>	Meeting ID: 813 6440 6590
Wednesday 23 August @ 2pm	<b>Sue Devons Gil – My father, Samuel Devons: nuclear physicist &amp; refugee</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84359813740">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84359813740</a>	Meeting ID: 843 5981 3740
Wednesday 30 August @ 2pm	<b>Norbert Meyn (curator) – Music, Migration and Mobility: Jewish Émigré Musicians in the UK</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88307517926">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88307517926</a>	Meeting ID: 883 0751 7926

## KEEP FIT WITH AJR

All AJR members & friends are invited to take part in these online exercise and dance classes throughout the coming month.

Every Monday @ 10.30am EXCEPT 29 AUGUST	<b>Get Fit where you Sit (seated exercise)</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Every Tuesday @ 11.00am	<b>Shelley's Exercise class</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622</a>	Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622
Every Wednesday @ 10.30am	<b>Dance Yourself Fit with Jackie Turner</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494</a>	Meeting ID: 8630 248 5494



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